THE HISTORY OF

ROCK

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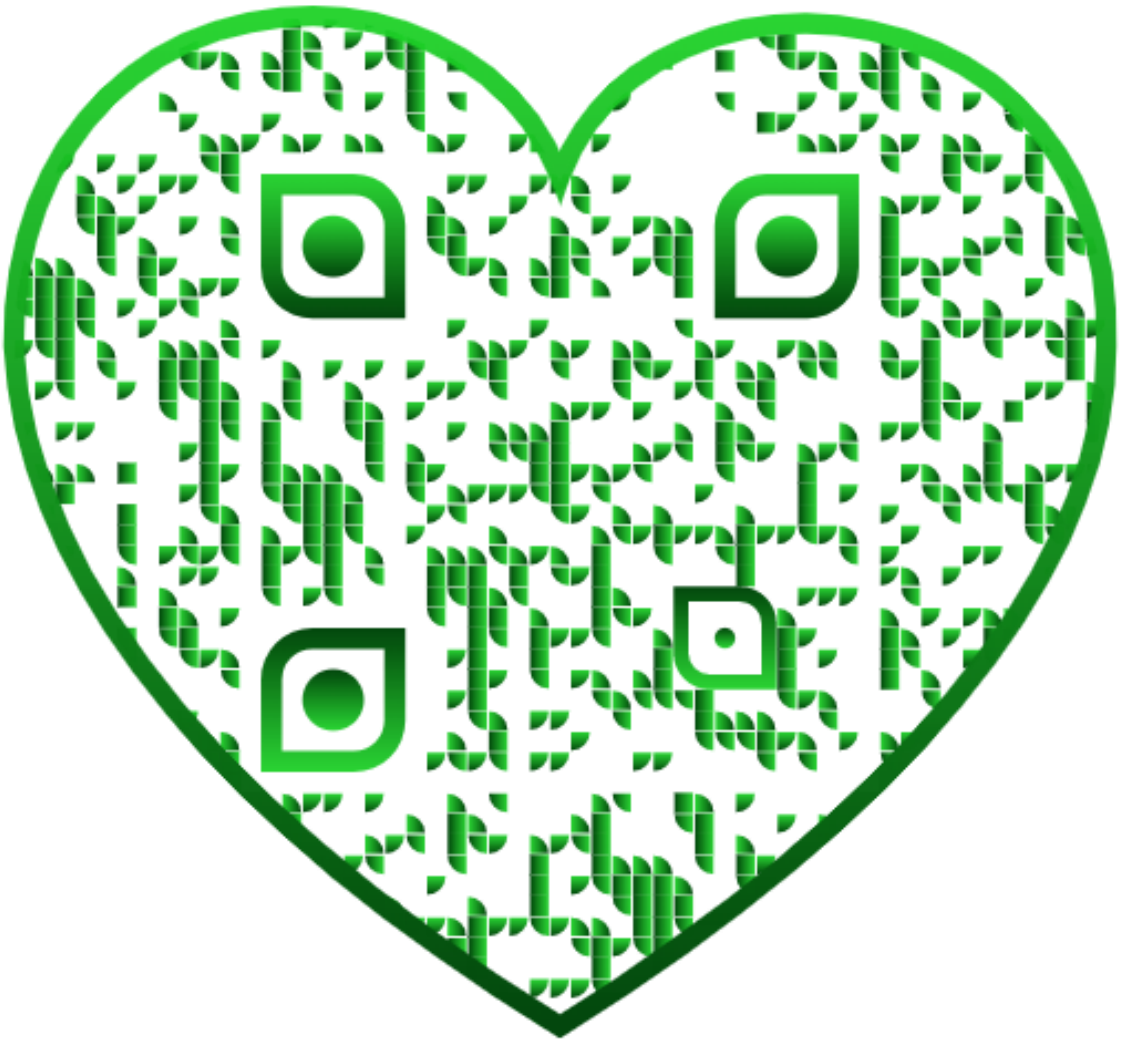

THE HISTORY OF ROCK

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Britain Invades the World

In the mid Sixties British was best in international music

The Best of British: Herman (Peter Noone) fronts both his group and the Union Jack on a US television show. In the States, Herman's Hermits rivalled the Beatles as the most successful of the British invasion groups.

BEFORE 1964, the United States' worldwide domination of the pop music industry – and youth culture in general – was virtually total. Few British artists made much of an impression overseas, and those that did manage to penetrate foreign markets tended to be little more than imitations of American sounds and styles. In 1963, British acts failed to achieve a single *Billboard* Top Fifty placing, although Rolf Harris, a UK-based Australian, reached Number 3 with the novelty 'Tie Me Kangaroo Down Sport'. By the following year, however, the tables had turned full circle. At the beginning of February 1964, the Beatles hit the Number 1 spot in the Hot Hundred with 'I Want To Hold Your Hand' and the United States' position on the throne of rock'n'roll was seriously threatened.

The Beatles had five further US chart-toppers in 1964 and the nation's teen consumers squandered increasing amounts of money on such items as Beatle wigs, Beatle boots, Beatle stockings, talcum powder, wallpaper, hats, sweaters, chewing gum, cakes, ice-cream and bubble-bath. The Beatles could do no wrong, and their fellow countrymen were taken to heart with fervour; the Animals, Manfred Mann and Peter and Gordon also made the Number 1 spot, while the Zombies, the Dave Clark Five, Gerry and the Pacemakers, Billy J. Kramer and the Dakotas, the Rolling Stones, the Kinks, Chad and Jeremy, the Honeycombs, Dusty Springfield and even the Bachelors gained Top Ten hits. With the US market so tightly in its grip, the UK could now conquer the world.

American anglophiles

In 1966, Victor 'Moulty' Moulten, the one-handed drummer of New England beat group the Barbarians, was quoted as saying: 'We hate fourteen-year-old girls from the Bronx who go to the mod shops and say "What can we get that's English to walk around the village in today?" And at eleven they have to take off their John Lennon hats and go home.'

Anglophilia had taken over the States' popular culture, its music and its fashion scene; and despite Moulty's apparent loathing of the craze for all things English, the Barbarians were just one of the hundreds of US groups who modelled their sound and their image on that of British bands. Although they wore leather sandals rather than the by now requisite Beatle boots, the group were in all other respects nothing more than Anglo pretenders. They sported Rolling Stones-style haircuts, covered numbers such as the Animals' 'House Of The Rising Sun' and their first hit, 'Are You A Boy Or Are You A Girl', released in June 1965, contained many a reference to Liverpool.

Above: The Rattles from Germany were one of the more enduring of the many European groups that imitated the British sound. Right: British beat prepares to go international as Brian Epstein shares a joke with Dusty Springfield before departing on the next flight from London's Heathrow Airport. Gerry Marsden and DJ Jimmy Savile are also in attendance.

This desire to copy the new approach which was being imported from the UK was evident in the work of almost every US rock band of the mid Sixties. Some went on to develop distinctive styles of their own, like the Byrds, whose leader Roger McGuinn had been inspired to switch from folk to rock after seeing the Beatles' film *A Hard Day's Night*. Many more, however, remained pale imitations of British originals.

New Jersey's Knickerbockers, whose 'Lies' became a US Top Twenty hit towards the end of 1965, managed to sound more like the Beatles than the Beatles themselves, while San Francisco's Chocolate Watch Band were Rolling Stones impostors. Their producer Ed Cobb later confessed: 'They started out as a Rolling Stones copy in order to make money. They played at dances and stuff like that. Then Bill [Henry] got into the role of the Stones copy so much that he took on being Mick Jagger. He believed that he was the original and Jagger was the copy!'

The US groups' attempts to sound English often bordered on the ridiculous. The Bugs (a name intended to draw attention through its connection with beetles) adopted heavily-exaggerated Liverpudlian accents on their 1965 local Texas hit 'Pretty Girl' – and the effect was absurd. The Turtles, on the other hand, tried to fool *their* audience by billing themselves, in the early days, as 'The Turtles From England'. They even acquired work through posing as Englishmen, as singer Mark Volman later recalled: 'We used to go to bowling alleys and order tea with plenty of milk and tell them we were Gerry and the Pacemakers.'

By the middle of the decade, almost every corner of the Western world had become obsessed by the British beat and the look of London and Liverpool. In Australia 'I Want To Hold Your Hand' had hit the top of the charts in January 1964; six months later, 300,000 people turned out in the streets of Adelaide to welcome the Beatles. With Beatlemania on the rampage, Australian radio, TV and record companies became increasingly hesitant to entertain home-grown talent. They looked to the UK for their revenue, and thus antipodean bands had to struggle for recognition. Groups like Ray Brown and the Whispers – strict Merseybeat impersonators right down to the matching suits and ties – and the Missing Links, who plundered the music and fashion catalogues of the Stones, the Yardbirds and the Pretty Things, achieved minor success. Only the Easybeats, who started out with a residency at Sydney's Beatle Village, broke through to international fame with a considerably less derivative repertoire.

The musically-ambitious youth of Canada suffered similar media prejudice. Canadian radio shut its doors to home talent, while record companies such as Capitol-Canada – which acquired the services of the Beatles, the Dave Clark Five, the Yardbirds, the Hollies and other British bands – just didn't want to know. When Toronto band Ritchie Knight and the Mid-Knights presented their (independently-pressed) records to CHUM-AM, the city's major rock station, not only did the DJs

refuse to play them, but they smashed the records before the group's eyes. This was, however, an unusually extreme reaction. Even so, only British groups, or the occasional out-and-out Beatles copyists (such as Ottawa's Staccatos, Montreal's J.B. and the Playboys or Toronto's Lords of London), were acceptable.

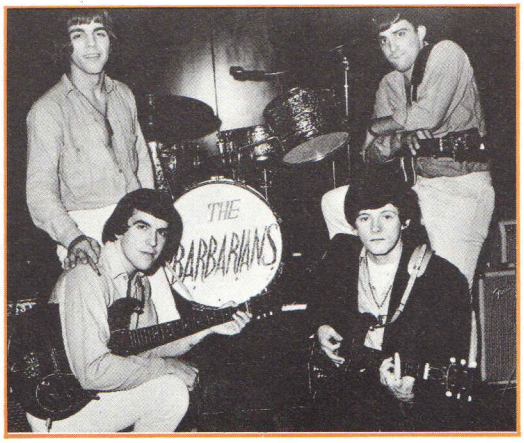
Europe, too, had a multitude of imitators. In Sweden, for instance, the appearance of the Beatles had sparked off a reaction against the stagnant music scene; by the mid Sixties, hundreds of groups had appeared, echoing the noise from across the sea. Among the most popular were the Tages – voted 'the Beatles of Sweden' in 1963 – and Ola and the Janglers, who relied almost exclusively on English material such as the Zombies' 'She's Not There' and the Kinks' 'Stop Your Sobbing'. Some of the Swedish bands went so far as to borrow names from English groups – the Gonks and Steampacket, for example – and such was the demand for British beat that many British bands unknown in their homeland were able to move to Sweden and pursue lucrative careers – the Deejays, the Red

Squares, the Renegades and others.

Germany's British mimics included the Rattles, the Rivets, the Hi Fis, and the Rollicks, while in Spain groups such as Los Brincos (who sported a striped version of the Beatle jacket), Grupo 15 (whose recordings included the Beatles' 'Michelle' and 'Girl' and the Kinks' 'Dandy') and Lone Star (who hit with their version of the Stones' 'Satisfaction') were in the forefront of Latin anglo infatuation. The UK craze even got to Mexico – Los Rockin' Devils' debut single was 'Juego De Amor' (Wayne Fontana's 'Game Of Love'), while their first album, *Exitos A Go Go*, included 'You Soy Enrique VIII' (Herman's Hermits' 'I'm Henry VIII, I Am') and 'Toda El Dia Y Toda La Noche' (the Kinks' 'All Day And All Of The Night'). Los X-5's album, *Al Compas De La Nueva Ola*, featured three Beatles songs and three Dave Clark Five numbers, while Los Freddys were Mexico's answer to London's burgeoning R&B scene.

Carnaby chic

The global fad for British fashion and music proved to be much more than just another passing phase. Before the obsession had been given a chance to flag, the mod scene – centred on Carnaby Street, Swinging London and groups like the Who and the Small Faces – had



arrived to bolster the cause. By 1966, the associated styles and trends were being reflected increasingly in the media worldwide.

The British female 'look' – mini-skirt, long, straight hair and wide-eyed loveliness – was to make international celebrities of such models as Jean Shrimpton and Pattie Boyd (whose fame was enhanced, in 1966, by her marriage to George Harrison). Such was the appeal of the London dollies that Pattie was recruited by US teen-fashion magazine *16* to contribute a monthly column, entitled 'Letters From London'. She reported on the latest trends in Carnaby Street, informed readers as to what the Beatles and Stones were wearing at the moment, and gave advice on how to turn dark and curly hair straight and blonde.

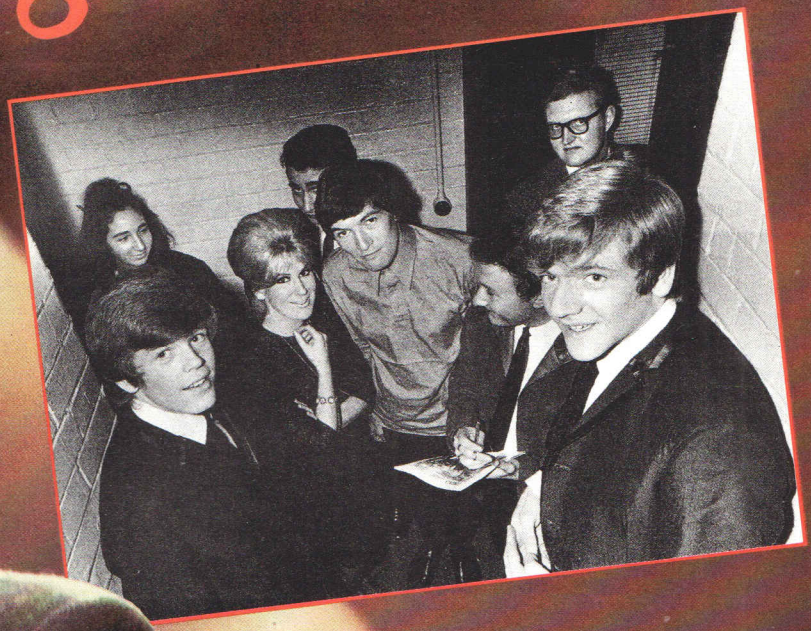
Britain was also exhibiting a marked influence on the hitherto US-dominated cinema industry. 1964 had been a golden year for the British movie trade; Oscars had been awarded to Rex Harrison (for *My Fair Lady*) and Julie Andrews (for *Mary Poppins*), while the year's biggest box-office money-spinners had included *Becket*, starring Peter O'Toole and Richard Burton, *The Pink Panther*, with Peter Sellers and David Niven, *The Servant*, with Dirk Bogarde and James Fox, and the second James Bond film, *From Russia With Love*. And there was *A Hard Day's Night*, which many critics suggested was the first viewable pop film and proved to be the kiss of death for the American 'beach party flick'.

Even Elvis Presley responded on celluloid to the British threat when, in 1967, he appeared in his twenty-fourth film, *Double Trouble*. 'Elvis takes mad, mod Europe by song as he swings into a brand new adventure, filled with dames, diamonds and danger!' proclaimed posters for the movie. As the publicity angle suggested, the film was a belated concession to the British invasion, featuring Elvis as a singer in a London nightclub backed by a group called the G Men, who did their best to look like the Beatles. Meanwhile, British style was the selling-point of such US television adventure series as 'The Man From UNCLE' (which began its first run in 1964) and its sequel, two years later, 'The Girl From UNCLE'. These borrowed heavily from the James Bond films and the TV series 'The Avengers'.

By 1967, however, the United States had come back into its own; the Monkees, with their re-introduction of teenybop idolatry, had become international properties and the psychedelic age had given birth to a host of US groups – the Grateful Dead, Spirit, Love, Moby Grape and the Electric Prunes to name but a few – who no longer depended on Britain for inspiration. Fashion was no longer dictated by Carnaby Street but by the hippies along Haight Ashbury – bells, beads and kaftans had put an end to blazers and Chelsea boots. But although the United States had regained a musical and youth cultural identity of its own, it would never again recapture its global domination of the rock market. TOM HIBBERT

Left: The Barbarians – a trademark of the group was their leather sandals, a somewhat surprising departure from their standard imitation of all things British. Above: Swinging London's fashion scene is exemplified by mini-skirted girls posing at Biba's Kensington boutique.

Into Something Good



Herman's Hermits struck it rich in the United States

WHAT RICKY NELSON WAS to Elvis Presley, Herman's Hermits were to the Beatles – idols cast in the same mould, pretenders to their mentors' pop crown, who fostered their own huge following thanks to expert management and shrewd career planning. Never the world's most creative musicians, their adolescent good looks and sweet, uncomplicated pop sound appealed particularly to an audience marginally too young for the Beatles. More significantly, the Hermits became – largely because of the laboured 'Englishness' of their image – easily the most popular and durable of the handful of British groups who enjoyed greater success in America than in their home country.

Herman's Hermits were really just a vehicle for the small voice and little-boy charm of front-man Peter Noone (born on 5 November 1947), who was just 17 when the group recorded their first hit. The other members of the group were former hairdresser Barry Whitwam (born 21 July 1946) drums, telephone engineer Keith Hopwood (born 26 October 1946) guitar, student Derek Leckenby (born 14 May 1946) guitar, and process engraver Karl Green (born 31 July 1946) bass. The group came together in Manchester in 1963 as the Heartbeats. They were one of the second wave of Manchester groups who sprang up in the wake of the Hollies and Freddie and the Dreamers, though their gigs were at first limited to youth club dates and the occasional school dance. Noone joined them as lead singer early in 1964.

Peter was a child actor of some experience, having appeared in the TV series 'Knight Errant' and, more notably, as the son of character Len Fairclough in the Manchester-based TV serial 'Coronation Street'. Born in Davyhulme, Manchester, on 5 November 1947, he was educated at St Bede's College and Stretford Grammar School and took up drama and singing lessons at 14. His TV roles brought him minor local prestige and turned the Heartbeats into local celebrities, and it was on the strength of their growing teenybopper following in and around the Tameside area that producer Mickie Most came to see them in concert in Bolton.

Most later claimed that a photograph of Noone was all he needed to recognise star potential – 'I thought he looked like John F. Kennedy', he told one interviewer – and it's probable that he would have signed Noone as a solo artist but for the Beatles-inspired craze for groups. Some measure of his lack of interest in the rest of the group can be gained from his refusal to use them on the first Herman's Hermits recordings: instead, he brought in session musicians like the experienced Big Jim Sullivan and Yardbird-to-be Jimmy Page.

By mid 1964, when he signed the group to a contract with Columbia, Most already had a reputation as arguably the best of Britain's young record producers. His plans for the Heartbeats, a more malleable outfit than Most protégés the Animals, for example, involved first changing their name to one that drew attention to Peter Noone as the focal point of the group. Someone said that Peter looked like Sherman, a character in TV's 'The Bullwinkle Show', and the new name of Herman's Hermits was concocted. Next, Peter was persuaded to drop any idea of playing an instrument (in his case, guitar and piano) – nothing should detract from his face and voice. Then came a well-orchestrated publicity campaign to tie in with the release of their first single, 'I'm Into Something Good', and key appearances on BBC's 'Top Of The Pops' and ITV's 'Thank Your Lucky Stars', the two shows that – in contrast to the chaotic, often controversial 'Ready Steady Go!' – still portrayed pop as innocuous, safe and wholesome.

Herman and his Hermits, the acceptable face of British pop. Singer Peter Noone is pictured on a television show (left); at the Edmonton Granada with Dusty Springfield (inset left); with the group on stage (above) and in London (below).

Something successful

The launch of Herman's Hermits was a calculated piece of star-making on Mickie Most's part, but Noone himself – thanks to his previous professional experience – proved well-equipped for the role. Vocally, he had very little to offer beyond an ability to sing in key, but Most deliberately chose material that both suited Noone's narrow range and enhanced his cuddlesome image. 'I'm Into Something Good', for instance, was a Gerry Goffin-Carole King song that depicted a boy telling his friends about meeting a new girl in the neighbourhood; it was a naïve boy-next-door song that portrayed Peter as the kind of polite, trustworthy teenager of whom any mother would approve.

'I'm Into Something Good' reached Number 1 in the UK in late September 1964; the follow-up, another Goffin-King composition called 'Show Me Girl', was released in the same week that its predecessor dropped out of the charts yet only peaked at a disappointing Number 19. Its relative failure could probably be put down to the competition in the chart at the time – the Beatles, Rolling Stones, Supremes and Kinks all had Top Ten records – but it caused Mickie Most to re-think his policy.

Rather than persevere with what was essentially a very conventional beat group sound, he went back to high-school pop of the late Fifties for the group's next release, a version of the Rays' 1957 American hit, 'Silhouettes'. More of a true collective effort than either of the Hermits' two previous records, much of the record's charm lay in Noone's stumbling, rather breathless handling of the song's complicated lead vocal line and went to Number 3 in the British charts. The follow-up was another well-remembered song of the high-school era, Sam Cooke's 'Wonderful World', the lyrics of which again suited Noone's affected aura of wide-eyed innocence. The disc peaked at Number 7 in Britain in 1965.

It was in the United States, however, that Herman's Hermits eventually made

the most spectacular impact. 'I'm Into Something Good' gave their US chart career an encouraging start in Christmas 1964, reaching Number 13 on the *Billboard* listings, but the big breakthrough came when their American label, MGM, mounted a big promotion campaign just prior to their first US tour in May 1965. The sudden interest in the Hermits reached almost Beatles proportions when three discs – 'Silhouettes', 'Can't You Hear My Heartbeat?' and 'Mrs Brown, You've Got A Lovely Daughter' – entered the chart within weeks of one another, to be followed by three more Top Ten discs before the end of September. An album, *Introducing Herman's Hermits*, also sold well during the summer. Collectively the group's discs sold nearly 10 million copies in America alone by the close of 1965, a figure exceeded only by the Beatles.

Nostalgic Noone

Their extraordinary popularity in the US puzzled British pop writers, but it had everything to do with timing and the marketing of an image. Unlike such groups as Gerry and the Pacemakers, Freddie and the Dreamers and the Dave Clark Five, Herman's Hermits did not immediately follow the Beatles to the States; sufficient time elapsed for them to benefit from the positive association of being British, without having to compete (as the other groups had done) with the Beatles on their own terms. By 1965, the Beatles had already outgrown the younger sections of their audience and the newer pop fans responded to Peter Noone as their very own star.

The group's American hits also reflected the persistent US obsession with all things English between 1965 and 1967. Peter Noone not only looked like a typical northern working-class lad, he also sang like one. 'Mrs Brown, You've Got A Lovely Daughter' became their first US Number 1 on the strength of Noone's George Formby-like delivery, and subsequent records like 'Leaning On A Lamp Post' (a song Formby made famous) and 'Dandy' (written by Ray Davies of the Kinks) had the same kind of appeal.

Music-hall songs provided the group with an almost limitless source of material, presenting as they did a romanticised, nostalgic picture of English life: 'I'm Henry VIII, I Am' dated from Edwardian times and gave the Hermits their second US chart-topper in 1965, while their albums included knockabout comedy songs like 'The Future Mrs 'Awkins' and 'Two Lovely Black Eyes', both of Victorian vintage, that could not have been too familiar to American ears. Probably the ultimate Herman's Hermits version of a music-hall favourite was their 'My Old Dutch', which reduced audiences to tears on US television in 1966. Columbia, however, preferred to release only standard pop material in the beat vein in the UK, keeping the music-hall items for albums. The group's other hits included

By the end of 1967, Herman's Hermits had been edged out of the limelight, but they carried on into the Seventies as a successful television and club-circuit group. Right: Peter Noone concedes to changing fashions and wears a psychedelic shirt. Insets: The singer with producer Mickie Most (left); playing the piano (centre), and reunited with the Hermits (right).

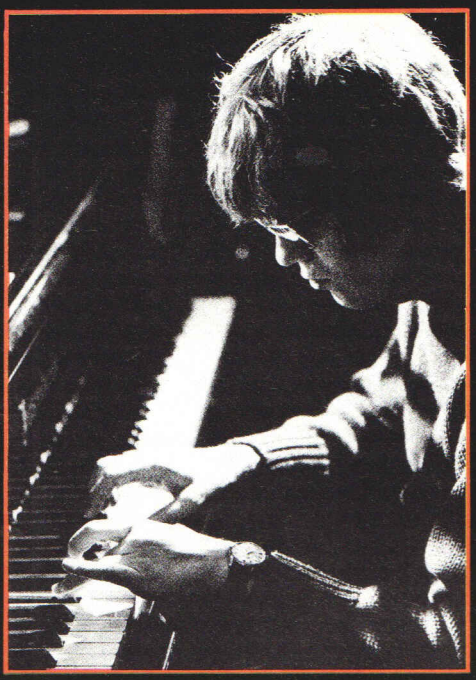
competent versions of songs by some of the better British songwriters, like 'No Milk Today' by Graham Gouldman, 'You Won't Be Leaving' by Tony Hazzard, and 'There's A Kind Of Hush' by Geoff Stephens and Les Reed.

From 1965 onwards, Herman's Hermits seemed to have two separate careers in Britain and America. In the UK, they tended to be seen as just another pop group with a very loyal following, but across the Atlantic their vast popularity remained steady for several years and Peter Noone was groomed as a potential all-round entertainer on numerous prime-time television variety shows. He became accepted, too, as a kind of pop spokesman, making mild comments in 1967 about the burgeoning flower-power movement that illustrated his isolation from his fellow performers and his innate musical conservatism. 'I dislike hippies,' he told a reporter. 'I don't like people who go about shouting and wearing badges . . . . I know I can't sing Negro music and I don't need to or want to.'

Fluctuating fortunes

Herman's Hermits proved remarkably durable considering the huge turnover of British artists in America after the Beatles' initial breakthrough, but their success was hardly likely to last without some basic change in style. The year 1967 proved to be crucial; sales of their records went into marked decline and Peter Noone in particular appeared unable or unwilling to move with the times. Even in teenybopper terms, the Hermits were no longer the cutest thing going: by 1967, much of their hard-core of teenage support had been lost to the Monkees, who happened to have a young Manchester lad of their own in Davy Jones, by coincidence another former child actor and 'Coronation Street' bit-player. 'Don't Go Out In The Rain', released in mid 1967, reached only Number 18 in the US chart and was their last Top Twenty hit.

Their decline in the United States was dramatic but, ironically, it was in the UK that their popularity held most firm. There was only one hit in 1967 – 'There's A Kind Of Hush' – but during the following year the group enjoyed quite a renaissance in chart fortunes, with 'I Can Take Or Leave Your Loving' reaching Number 11, 'Sleepy Joe' at Number 12, and 'Sunshine Girl' peaking at Number 8. In 1969 they had their biggest British hit since 'I'm Into Something Good', a Geoff Stephens-John Carter composition called



'My Sentimental Friend', which went to Number 2. The reason for this revival in fortune lay primarily in the programming policy of BBC Radio One, which favoured precisely that kind of family pop that the pirate stations had avoided playing.

Separate ways

Many expected that Peter Noone would leave the Hermits at some point, probably to take up a career in straight acting or musical comedy as Tommy Steele, Gerry Marsden and Joe Brown had done before him. Instead, he kept the group together for television and club dates and scored with another two hits in 1970, 'Years May Come, Years May Go' (Number 7) and 'Bet Yer Life I Do' (Number 22), the latter being one of the first releases on Mickie Most's new RAK label. Later that year, the group modified its name to Peter Noone and Herman's Hermits, and 'Lady Barbara' (written by the members of Most's other major RAK signing, Hot Chocolate) reached Number 3 to become the last Hermits record to enter the British chart. Noone, meanwhile, began a solo career and recorded a very well-received version of David Bowie's 'Oh You Pretty Thing' (from Bowie's *Hunky Dory* album), which peaked at Number 12 during June 1971.

The Hermits carried on, initially on their own and then with a Peter Noone soundalike under the name Herman's Hits; they fared particularly well in cabaret in America, where the appetite for nostalgia seemed insatiable. Noone moved to France in 1972 with his wife Mireille and divided his time between songwriting and record production and running the Zoo Boutique in New York, which he opened in 1968. In 1980, it was revealed that he was the man behind a new album and single by a rock'n'roll group called the Tremblers – a return, he said, to the basics of rock and pop that had originally so attracted him.

Herman's Hermits did leave a lasting commercial legacy by showing just how marketable a combination of boyish looks, bouncy tunes and carefully nurtured teen appeal could be. The Monkees owed much to them, as did many of the groups of the so-called 'glitter era' of the early to mid Seventies like the Bay City Rollers, Paper Lace and the Rubettes – some of whom also benefited from the production touch of Mickie Most. Most important of all, the Hermits showed the extent to which the American pop market could be exploited by British groups following in the wake of the Beatles.

STEPHEN BARNARD

Herman's Hermits
Recommended Listening

Both Sides Of Herman's Hermits (Columbia SX6084) (Includes: Little Boy Sad, Story Of My Life, My Reservation's Been Confirmed, Bus Stop, For Love, Where Were You When I Needed You, All The Things I Do For You Baby, Leaning On A Lamp Post, Dial My Number, Oo-ee Baby, Je Suis Anglais, Listen People).

TIME OF TH

How five schoolboys created an all-time classic

IN THE BEGINNING, it was a dream come true: five schoolboys with a million-seller on their hands the week they turned professional. Rod Argent (born 14 June 1945, piano, organ), Colin Blunstone (born 24 June 1945, vocals), Hugh Grundy (born 6 March 1945, drums), Paul Atkinson (born 19 March 1946, guitar) and Paul Arnold (bass) formed the Zombies in the spring of 1963, playing the obligatory selection of R&B staples expected of any self-respecting group. Their only personnel change came some six months later when Arnold left to concentrate on his homework (he subsequently became a doctor) and was replaced by Chris White (born 7 March 1943).

In those early days, they used to write and rehearse in Markyate, in a room over the general store owned by White's father. The occasional gigs they managed were usually at colleges and rugby clubs around the St Albans-Hatfield area where they lived and went to school. Initially, music was not allowed to interfere with academic progress, but the possibility of widening their horizons was strengthened by a runaway victory in a 'Herts Beat' competition sponsored by the London *Evening News*. Their prize was an audition with Decca Records, who expressed only mild interest in their cover versions but whipped out a contract as soon as they heard two group originals, 'She's Not There' and 'You Make Me Feel Good', which were paired for release in July 1964.

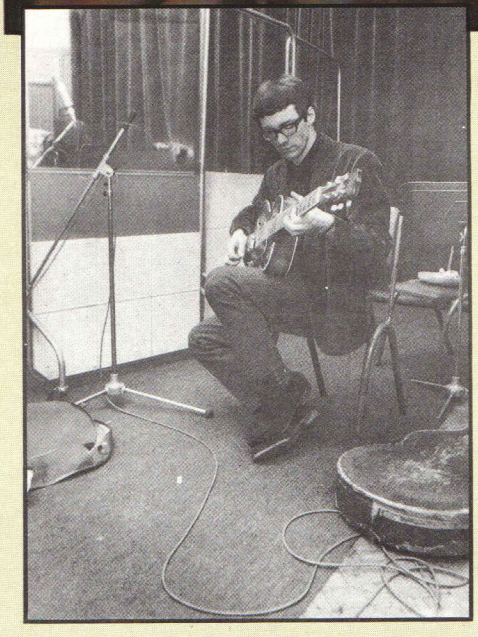
Only the second song Rod Argent had ever written, 'She's Not There' was one of the most imaginative and arresting singles of the era. With a subtlety and sophistication rare in grass-roots pop, it displayed that first studio rush of earnest guys who'd been roomed up for months working out ideas and refinements for just such an opportunity. Save for the Beatles, there were no obvious influences, which led reviewers to talk in vague terms of its jazzy feel and intricate harmonies, but the market was open for novelty and its unique qualities assisted the record's climb to Number 12 in the charts.

Flying the flag

The group's main strengths, it became increasingly apparent, lay in Blunstone and Argent: Blunstone for his anguished voice, one of the most distinctive in Sixties pop, and Argent for his songwriting,

E ZOMBIES

Left: The academics of rock look to the future. Right: The Zombies perform on 'Ready Steady Go!', while Paul Atkinson practices a guitar lick at Decca's West Hampstead studios (inset below).



arranging and innovative keyboard work. The other three members, particularly White whose songwriting contribution was always underestimated, were all competent and, unsurprisingly, they decided to forsake academic pursuits in favour of beckoning stardom, signing with manager Tito Burns.

Inexplicably, their second single, 'Leave Me Be' – described by one critic as 'the ultimate teen angst melodrama' – was a total flop: no airplay, no sales. But by this time, 'She's Not There' was climbing the American charts, eventually peaking at Number 2 in *Billboard's* Hot Hundred.

In company with the Shangri-Las, Ben E. King, the Shirelles, the Nashville Teens and several others, the Zombies spent the 10 days after Christmas 1964 doing a short spot on Murray the K's package show at the Brooklyn Fox before bussing around the States on a four-week tour, waving the Union Jack and opening territory for the British invasion. Their subtlety was lost on the majority of fans. 'They never came to listen,' recalled Blunstone, 'they came to scream and throw things – that was the way to behave in those days. I remember the police in New York had to rescue Paul from a mob of girls who had squashed him up against a plate-glass door. The pressure was so great that if the cops hadn't waded in, the glass would have shattered. As it was, by the time they got to him, he'd had his jacket and shirt ripped right off.'

In January 1965, Decca issued 'Tell Her No', another brilliant single which struggled to Number 42 to become their second and last UK hit. If fared better in the United States, reaching Number 6 there. Sustained by two further American tours, the group kept buoyant with two more minor hits, 'She's Coming Home' (Number 58) and 'I Want You Back Again' (Number 95). Their influence soon surfaced in groups like the Lovin' Spoonful, the Critters, the Turtles, the Association, Simon and Garfunkel, and the Left Banke, all of whom admitted to falling under the Zombies' spell.

Their only Decca album, *Begin Here*, released in April 1965, included R&B standards like 'I Got My Mojo Working' and 'You've Really Got A Hold On Me', holdovers from their earliest stage sets, but it was original material, written by Argent and White, that confirmed what a classy bunch of musicians the Zombies were. The album met indifferent response, however, as did seven more excellent singles which were collected on the 1982 compilation *She's Not There*.

In total contrast to the aggressive, arrogant stance of the Stones, the Small Faces and the Kinks, the Zombies were lighter and more introspective. The melancholy of the shy, awkward romantic was their forte, so they got pigeonholed as a group who sang wistful, melodic, bittersweet love songs, woven around minor chords, polished harmony and an overall jazzy feel – and that's the style they adhered to until Decca eventually let them go in the summer of 1967.

Singles slaves

In terms of audience appeal, the Zombies fell between two stools. On the one hand their singles were too adventurous for the throng to relate to, and the cooler set didn't even bother to listen to them because they thought they were a disposable pop group in the same league as the Applejacks and the Honeycombs. So where does the blame for their commercial failure lie? With the audience for not listening? With the band for not having sufficiently commercial qualities and potential? With their management for not treating them as a serious group capable of developing a substantial, long-term following – like the Kinks or the Byrds, for instance – and directing them accordingly? Or with Decca, who apparently saw groups as little more than short-term money-spinners?

Certainly, shrewd handling might have enabled a crossover into the increasingly-important album market, but it is most unlikely that Decca even realised the possibility of such a ploy. The Stones and Moody Blues were resilient enough to survive in spite of Decca's constraints, but more precious talents like those of David Bowie, Cat Stevens, Joe Cocker, Genesis and Van Morrison (to name but a few) saw their careers withering away for lack of vision and positive tending by the company. The fact remains that, while more fortunate peers progressed through album experimentation, the Zombies were forced to strive for those three minutes of maximum commerciality every time they were allowed near a studio – and as long as the results were fresh and exhilarating, Decca saw no point in expanding their relationship.

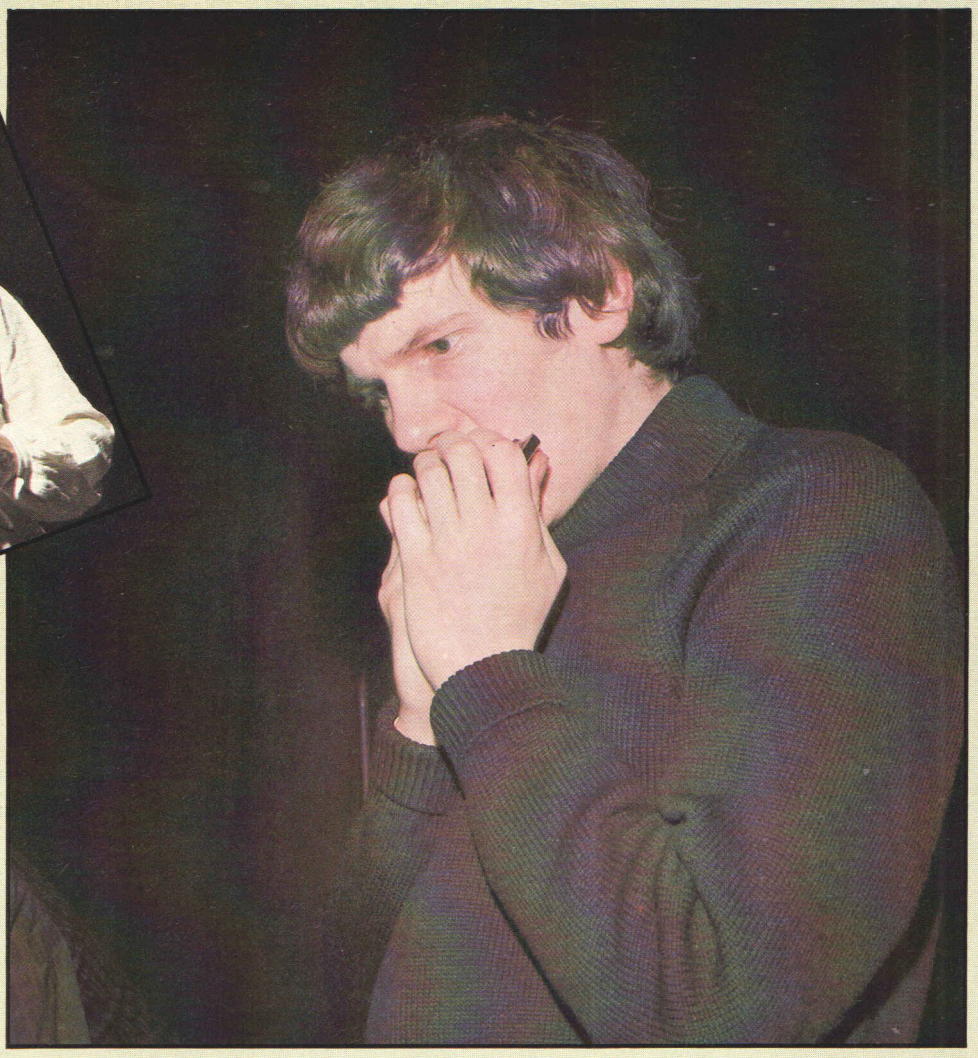
Oracle and acceptance

When CBS signed the group in July 1967, they were given an album deal involving total artistic freedom. The Zombies came up with a classic: *Odessey And Oracle* (though the spelling mistake in the title came from a group whose early publicity hinged on their scholastic achievements – 50 GCEs between them).

The album's sleeve-notes were brief: 'Really, music is a very personal thing; it's the product of a person's experiences. Since no two people have been exactly alike, each writer has something unique to say. That makes everything which is not just a copy of something else worth listening to.' That's the way they saw it – but not so the public.

By the spring of 1968 when psychedelia was giving way to the era of progressive rock, the Zombies were less than fashionable in Britain and nobody was surprised when neither the album nor any of the three singles drawn from it made the slightest impression. But in the States, it was a different story.

Originally, Columbia, CBS' American parent company, had turned down *Odessey And Oracle* but Al Kooper – the influential founder of Blood Sweat and Tears – made such extravagant claims on its behalf that the company grudgingly issued the album (complete with new Kooper sleeve-notes) on their subsidiary label Date. It failed to sell, as did two singles, but then, in late 1968, a third single, 'Time Of The Season', began to



The Zombies' scholarly image (below) was to play no part in the Seventies' solo careers of ex-members Argent (opposite) and Blunstone (right). The latter had mixed fortunes as a pop singer (above), while Argent went progressive (inset left).

gather momentum on AM radio playlists. In February the following year it broke into the Hot Hundred, eventually rising to Number 3, and went on to sell two million copies. Ironically, the Zombies were unable to exploit this belated recognition, for they had split up a year earlier and, despite subsequent preposterous financial inducements, they stood by their resolution never to re-form.

Lingering elegance

After the break-up, Paul Atkinson and Hugh Grundy quit performing for the administrative side of the business, taking positions in the International A&R department at CBS, while Chris White formed and ran a production/publishing company with Rod Argent. The latter continued to play and record, leading a new group, Argent, to moderate success during the first half of the Seventies before moving on to establish himself in film scores and musicals.

After a brief attempt to pursue a career as an insurance clerk, Colin Blunstone returned to the fray – first as Neil MacArthur (with a re-recording of 'She's Not There,' a Top Forty hit in 1969) and then under his own name. 'What Becomes Of The Broken Hearted', his 1981 collaboration with Dave Stewart, showed his undiminished elegance as a singer.

Statistically, on the basis of hits and popularity, the Zombies rank lower than less creative competitors like Freddie and the Dreamers and Herman's Hermits, but no one who ever listened to their music remembers them with anything but genuine affection.

PETE FRAME

THE ZOMBIES
Discography

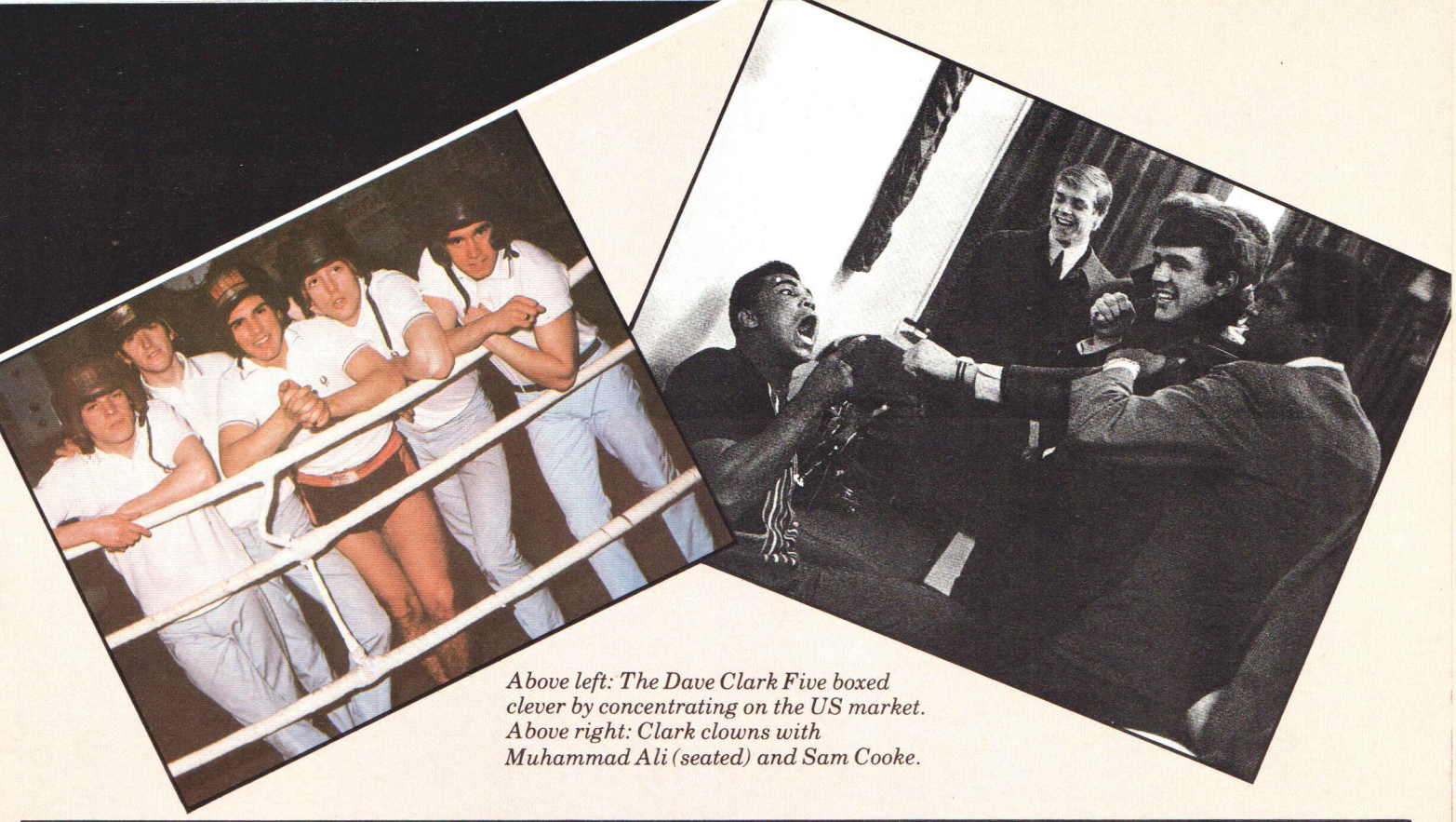
Singles
She's Not There/You Make Me Feel Good (Decca F11940, 1964); Leave Me Be/Woman (Decca F12004, 1964); Tell Her No/What More Can I Do? (Decca F12072, 1965); She's Coming Home/I Must Move (Decca F12125, 1965); Whenever You're Ready/I Love You (Decca F12225, 1965); Is This The Dream?/Don't Go Away (Decca F12296, 1965); Remember You/Just Out Of Reach (Decca F12322, 1966); Indication/How We Were Before (Decca F12426, 1966); Gotta Get A Hold On Myself/The Way I Feel Inside (Decca F12495, 1966); Going Out Of My Head/She Does Everything For Me (Decca F12584, 1967); Friends Of Mine/Beechwood Park (CBS 2960, 1967); Care Of Cell 44/Maybe After He's Gone (CBS 3087, 1967); Time Of The Season/I'll Call You Mine (CBS 3380, 1968); I Love You/The Way I Feel Inside (Decca F12798, 1968).

EP
The Zombies (Decca DFE8598, 1965) (Kinda Girl/Sometimes/It's Alright With Me/Summertime).

Albums (selective)
Begin Here (Decca LK4679); *Odessey And Oracle* (CBS BPG63280); *World Of The Zombies* (Decca SPA85); *She's Not There* (Decca TAB34).

BRITS ON BROADWAY

Above left: Ed Sullivan (left) chats with the Beatles and Brian Epstein (second left) on his TV show. Below: The Pacemakers on Broadway. Inset below: The Zombies.



Above left: The Dave Clark Five boxed clever by concentrating on the US market. Above right: Clark clowns with Muhammad Ali (seated) and Sam Cooke.

The UK groups who found transatlantic success

Prior to 1964, the US pop market was notoriously neglectful of overseas talent. British singers and groups consistently failed to break down traditional American insularity and those who occasionally did succeed – like Lonnie Donegan in 1956, Laurie London in 1958 and the Tornados in 1962 – were, generally speaking, one-hit wonders. All that began to change with the Beatles, whose massive and unprecedented success paved the way for dozens of groups who possessed the requisite British beat sound, Beatle-like image and English accents. The 10 months between the Beatles' first US visit and the close of 1964 saw the Hot Hundred debuts of the Dave Clark Five, Gerry and the Pacemakers, the Searchers, the Animals, the Rolling Stones and Herman's Hermits – all groups with a proven success record in Britain and the backing of big record companies with Stateside connections.

As leaders of the so-called British invasion, such groups created a climate in which still more British bands (and even a few solo performers) were able to flourish. This second wave of artists included some who actually enjoyed greater success in the States than in the UK itself, such as Peter and Gordon and the Zombies, while there were others like Chad and Jeremy and Ian Whitcomb who were virtual unknowns in Britain.

Their success abroad and relative failure at home was not easily explained but had much to do with recording circumstances, a group's sense of priorities (some, for instance, became semi-resident in the US and seemed unprepared to cultivate the home market), and the deals which labels on either side of the Atlantic made with each other. Most significant of all was the manner in which these artists were promoted: in the hands of American managers and publicists, the English traits of an act like Chad and Jeremy were accentuated to the point of dressing them in Union Jack waistcoats and encouraging them to exaggerate their college accents. Lacking such novelty appeal in Britain, they suffered in competition with the better, more established home groups.

Specs and sex appeal

While Peter and Gordon made an enormous impact in the UK with their first release, 'A World Without Love', it was America that gave them a career. The song became a hit – it reached Number 1 in both countries in 1964 – largely on the strength of the duo's much-publicised connection with the Beatles. Peter was the brother of actress Jane Asher, Paul McCartney's girlfriend, and the composition was McCartney's own, though credited to himself and John Lennon together; he also produced the disc.

Peter and Gordon remained major UK chart names for little more than a year, scoring well with 'Nobody I Know' (another Lennon-McCartney song, which reached Number 10), a revival of Buddy Holly's 'True Love Ways' (Number 2) and a modified version of the Teddy Bears' 1958 hit, 'To Know You Is To Love You' (Number 5). In the States, however, they proved much more durable, achieving Top Twenty placings with 'I Don't Want To See You Again', 'I Go To Pieces' (a Del Shannon song), 'Woman' (another Paul McCartney special, written under the pseudonym of Bernard Webb), 'Lady Godiva' and 'Knight In Rusty Armour' – this last hit coming in early 1967.

Peter and Gordon were ex-public school boys, pupils of Westminster School in London, and the story put around by their publicists was that they were 'discovered' while playing truant one evening at London's Pickwick Club, singing folk songs to an enraptured audience. They were vocally very competent, as might be expected from former choirboys, and they professed to have modelled themselves on the Everly Brothers. What distinguished them, though, was a certain clipped, precise, very English delivery, as each word was carefully measured and enunciated correctly. At their best on low-key, melancholic ballads, they inevitably sounded uncomfortable when attempting more upbeat material like 'All Shook Up', 'Lucille' and 'A Mess Of Blues', which featured on their albums. The same was true of their *Peter and Gordon Sing And Play The Hits Of Nashville, Tennessee* album, issued in 1966, on which they tried too hard to emulate the Everly Brothers sound.

The duo's general air of sedateness helped them in America, where they were accepted as the epitome of well-mannered, well-spoken, well-educated English youth – nice upper-class lads who looked like refugees from the set of *Goodbye Mr Chips*. They were low on charisma but managed to suggest hidden depths: Peter Asher looked both innocent and worldly-wise in his large, owlish spectacles, and Gordon Waller's faraway look and cherubic face offered a touch of sex appeal.

Their material, too, became more self-

consciously 'English' as their American success continued and, like Herman's Hermits, they were eventually reduced to recording novelty songs, music hall-type ditties and numbers that romanticised English suburban life, like 'Sunday For Tea', 'Flower Lady' and 'Greener Days'. With middle-of-the-road audiences in mind, they also came to specialise in neatly-packaged nostalgia, their albums replete with versions of time-honoured standards like 'When I Fall In Love' and 'Love Is A Many-Splendoured Thing'.

Their albums and singles were geared primarily for the US market, where they were handled by the Capitol label, which was responsible for releasing Beatles material. Their recording ouput was extraordinarily prolific – no fewer than 10 Peter and Gordon albums were released in America between mid 1964 and mid 1967 – and so it was hardly surprising that the duo burned themselves out, musically, so soon. Gordon Waller left to go solo in 1968 but had little success, while Peter Asher settled into a background role as A&R head of the Beatles' newly-created Apple label, discovering (among others) singer-songwriter James Taylor. He was sacked a little later in a mass purge of Apple staff by Allen Klein and moved back to America's West Coast, where he became one of the most influential and sought-after record producers of the Seventies through his album work with Linda Ronstadt.

Upright English gentlemen

In a similar vein to Peter and Gordon but more musically adventurous were Chad and Jeremy, a duo who struck lucky with 'Summer Song' (a US Number 7 hit in October 1964), and found themselves at the forefront of the British pop invasion. They meant very little in the UK and achieved just one Top Fifty entry when 'Yesterday's Gone' received extensive airplay on the country's pirate radio stations. They were both former students of the Central School of Speech and Drama in London, although it was Jeremy Clyde who had the keenest theatrical ambitions: an old Etonian, he had just served an acting apprenticeship with the Dundee Repertory Theatre when the States beckoned. Chad Stuart was from Durham and developed into a versatile instrumentalist, playing guitar, keyboards, piano, organ and sitar; he also wrote much of the duo's material.

Chad and Jeremy were polite, well-groomed and articulate, in fact every American's idea of upright English gentlemen, and the 'educated' angle was heavily pursued by their publicists. The transition from pure pop entertainers to thoughtful folk-rock singers was therefore fairly easy for them to accomplish, though their teenybop beginnings ensured they would never quite be accepted as part of the folk-rock movement in the same way that Simon and Garfunkel or the Lovin' Spoonful were. Theirs was a sweet, occasionally cloying folk-pop style that brought two further US Top Twenty hits in 'Willow Weep For Me' and 'Before And After' in 1965, plus a number of rather uninspired albums that included those standard items of mid-Sixties pop repertoire, 'Mr Tambourine Man' and 'Don't Think Twice, It's All Right', and a liberal mixing of songs associated with other British groups and singers.

By mid 1966, Chad and Jeremy had moved to California to live and had virtually given up on the British market for good, but they were never too happy with either their image or the musical expectations of their (still very young) audience. Craving the kind of intellectual attention accorded other British acts like the Kinks and Donovan, they embarked on what they later admitted was a disastrous tour of concert halls and college campuses. A six-month absence from the charts took its toll as the concert dates in particular attracted miniscule attendances, while response from the students ranged from lukewarm to a kind of puzzled enthusiasm.

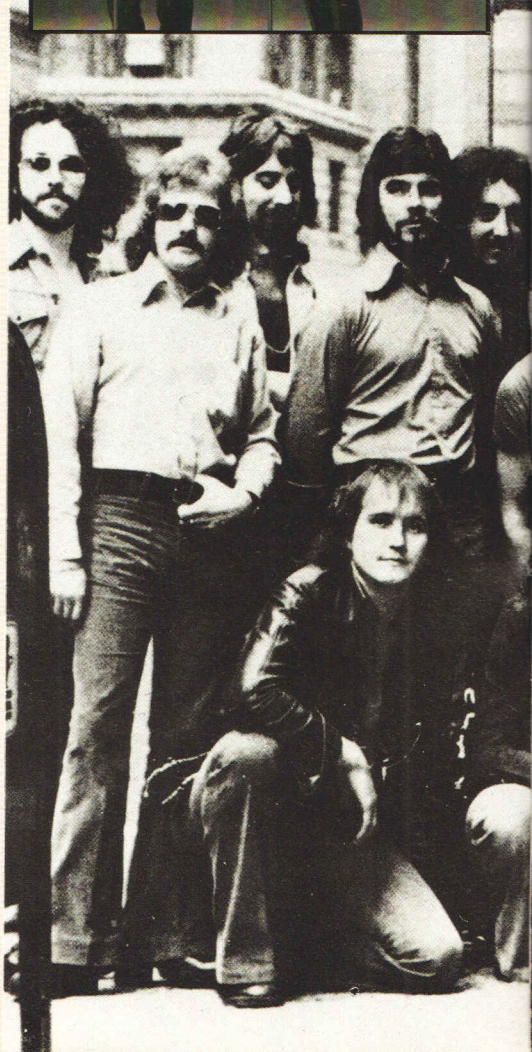
Facing a career crossroads, they approached Columbia (who had signed them from the independent World Artist label after their first two hits) with the idea of 'retiring' for a year and working on new musical ideas to solve what they called their creative bankruptcy. What finally emerged was an elaborate and highly-acclaimed album called *Of Cabbages And Kings*, which contained a 'Progress Suite' of five movements that echoed *Sgt Pepper* in its elaborate scoring, studio tricks and quirkily-critical lyrics.

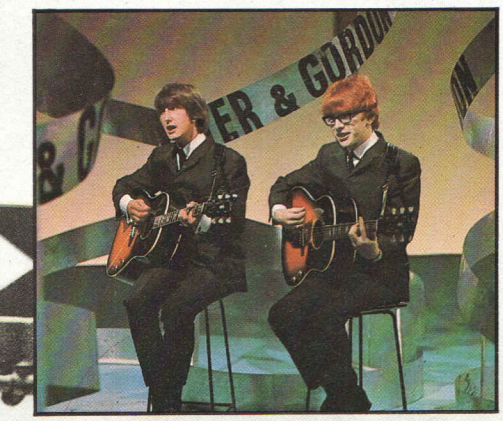
The problem for Chad and Jeremy was that, commercially, few wanted to know: launching themselves as progressive artists meant, in effect, starting all over again and the market, by 1967, was just too crowded to accommodate them. After breaking up a year later, Chad Stuart turned to songwriting and record production full-time and Jeremy Clyde resumed his acting career in the UK, earning much praise for his part in 'Conduct Unbecoming' on the West End stage. He has since appeared in television drama on many occasions, usually playing elegant English types.

Peter and Gordon and Chad and Jeremy both presented a kind of sanitised version of British beat, its rough edges softened by mixing in elements of old-time vaudeville or folk music. The Overlanders, a folk trio signed to Pye Records by Tony Hatch in 1963, were another British act who were perhaps *too* appealingly wholesome for the home market and more suited for mid-Sixties America. Their line-up consisted of Paul Arnold (lead guitar), Lawrie Mason (vocals) and Peter Bartholomew (rhythm guitar), who were augmented in the studio and on tour by bass player Terry Widlake and drummer David Welsh. Signed primarily as a kind of potential British answer to the Kingston Trio, they soon switched to beat music, fashioning an early marriage of folk and pop that proved more popular in the US.

Although the three founder members proved to be an adept songwriting team, both their US and UK releases tended to be cover versions of other people's songs: 'Yesterday's Gone', a minor hit in America, was a version of the Chad and Jeremy song, 'Along Came Jones' revived a favourite Coasters number, and 'Freight Train' was a skiffle standard from 1957, while 'Go Where You Wanna Go' was taken from an album by the Mamas and Papas. The Overlanders enjoyed their biggest-ever chart success with a somewhat mundane cover of a Paul McCartney

UK acts that cracked the US charts – Cook and Greenaway (right), alias David and Jonathan; besuited Ian Whitcomb with Beach Boy Mike Love (far right); Chad and Jeremy (below); Peter and Gordon (below right, and with the Stones, far right). Bottom: UK stars at a New York reunion in the early Seventies.





song from the Beatles' *Rubber Soul* album, 'Michelle', which reached Number 1 in Britain in early 1966. It brought them overnight fame in the UK yet, ironically, made a disappointing showing in America, where the version by David and Jonathan (in reality, songwriters Roger Cook and Roger Greenaway) sold better.

As for David and Jonathan themselves, they were one of several British acts who made a good initial impression with one hit single and yet completely failed to build upon their succes. Sometimes the quirks of national taste were to blame, in other cases US labels could not or would not provide the necessary backing for promotional tours or flying visits. The Nashville Teens, Wayne Fontana, his former backing group the Mindbenders, and the Troggs were other British names who failed to consolidate on promising American beginnings, in each case through no real fault of their own. Often the main reason for failure was simply too much competition.

Ian Whitcomb's case, too, is instructive. He was a political science student from Surrey who formed an R&B band called Bluesville while studying at Trinity College, Dublin. He took some tapes with him on an American vacation during 1964 and played them to Jerry Dennon, Seattle-based producer of the Kingsmen's punk-rock hit 'Louie Louie', who secured the release of 'This Sporting Life' – Whitcomb's idiosyncratic version of a folk-blues standard – on a Capitol subsidiary called Zoom. The disc made a minor impact, just scraping into *Billboard's* Hot Hundred, and Dennon saw enough potential to fly to Dublin to record some more tracks.

The new sessions produced 'You Turn Me On', on which Whitcomb adopted a ridiculously high-pitched falsetto and a slight stammer as he stumbled through an inane lyric built around the repetition of a trendy new catchphrase. The record did nothing in the UK but became a Number 8 hit in the US, partly due to intense television promotion and some rapid image-building – both of which were described brilliantly by Whitcomb himself in his book, *After The Ball*, published in 1972. His racy commentary on his sudden rise to fame and equally abrupt fall are essential reading for anyone wishing to understand the special frantic, lunatic character of the British invasion period.

Peter and Gordon, Chad and Jeremy, the Overlanders, Ian Whitcomb and the rest all had novelty value in common: they personified the most immediately likeable and accessible aspects of the British beat invasion, with varying degrees of durability. Their success did at least underline the continuing attractions of the United States for UK artists: not only did its sheer size make it the most lucrative market in the world – there was infinite prestige to be gained from achieving stardom in the birthplace of rock.

STEPHEN BARNARD

THE EASYBEATS

An Australian group with stardom on their minds

IN MID-SIXTIES AUSTRALIA, home-grown acts found it difficult to penetrate the music scene on a national level. With the country in the grip of Beatlemania and the airwaves dominated by British beat and rival sounds from the United States, record companies were cautious about investing in local talent. Australian bands had seemed to be neither viable nor fashionable until the Easybeats appeared.

Although the group's sound was, initially, largely based on the UK R&B of the Rolling Stones, the Kinks and similar groups, the Easybeats were much more than mere copyists. With their energy of performance and the diverse and original songwriting abilities of Harry Vanda and George Young, the group was simply too good to be ignored 'down under' for long.

The first single was released in March 1975; by the end of the year, with three consecutive Top Ten hits, the Easybeats had become Australia's leading group. Ironically, however, none of the group members had been born in Australia – each was a teenage son of European

The Easybeats – relaxing in the dressing room after a gig (above left), and wearing fanciful period costume (above). Below: The group in action.

migrant parents. Lead guitarist Vanda (born 22 March 1947) and bassist Dick Diamonde (born 28 December 1947) had arrived from Holland, rhythm guitarist Young (born 6 November 1947) from Scotland and drummer Gordon 'Snowy' Fleet (born 16 August 1945) from England. In 1963, all four were living at Sydney's Villawood Migrant Youth Hostel, where they began to play music.

Aussie idols

By 1964, the group had acquired a name courtesy of Snowy Fleet, a singer in Englishman Stevie Wright (born 20 December 1948) and a residency at the Beatle Village, a popular Sydney club. There they were spotted, in their sharp stage suits, by manager Mike Vaughn who introduced them to producer Ted Albert. Albert organised a session and the recorded results, which revealed a hard and unusually tight sound, secured a deal with Parlophone.

Lack of airplay guaranteed the failure of the debut single, 'For My Woman', but a follow-up, 'She's So Fine', was sufficiently strong and distinctive to win radio exposure. The record went to Number 1 in the summer of 1965 and the Easybeats quickly became antipodean teen idols. As George Young recalled: 'The fan hysteria took all the enjoyment out of playing. We went out and did one half hour, nobody could hear . . . we could have gone out and picked our noses, it wouldn't have made any difference.'

No attempt was made to play down teen appeal, however. The hits rolled along – 'Wedding Ring' and 'Sad And Lonely And Blue', built around complex yet commercially-persuasive chord sequences; 'Woman' and 'Come And See Her', more urgent and immediate dancing tunes – and Stevie Wright seemed more than happy to act out a heart-throb role. Ballads, such as 'In My Book', would be embellished on stage by performances in which tears would roll down the singer's cheeks (this he achieved by turning from the audience and rubbing onion in his eyes or, according to Young, 'occasionally he'd do it *without* the onion and just stick his *fingers* in his eyes'.

By the summer of 1966, however, the Easybeats were feeling restricted by geographical confines. None of their records had been released in the UK or US markets, and they were anxious to prove themselves in a wider context. Having secured an international deal with United Artists, the group took off for London where, under producer Shel Talmy (who had worked with the Kinks, the Who and Creation), they cut a new single.

As the year drew to a close, the musical approach of many an English group appeared to be mellowing – almost as if in preparation for the impending 'flower power' boom. The Easybeats, on the other hand, seemed more alert than ever before. 'Friday On My Mind', released in November, demonstrated their assurance. From the staccato plucking introduction, through the first ringing chords that herald the chorus and on to the fade, the excitement builds; the performance is relentlessly active. The single made Number 6 in the UK, Number 16 in the US and topped the charts in Australia for eight weeks; the song – revived, but not bettered, by David Bowie on his 1973 *Pin Ups* LP – remains a classic of power-pop. But the problem, in 1966, was the follow-up.

The Easybeats promote the classic 'Friday On My Mind' on British television.

Bad times, good times

There were other problems, too. Prior to setting off on an American East Coast tour, in early 1967 the band returned briefly to Australia. On the surface the Easybeats were the triumphant Aussie conquerors – but, in reality, the group was in a mess. Tangles with management were compounded by a contractual maze in which the group had somehow managed to sign 'exclusively' to two separate companies. And drugs merely exacerbated the difficulties: 'By that time the band was stoned off their nuts most of the time,' Young confessed. 'The general lethargy of the band was due to the dope thing.' And then, just before setting off for the States, Snowy Fleet decided to stay in Australia; Tony Cahill, from the Purple Hearts, stepped in at the last minute.

It was six months before a follow-up to 'Friday On My Mind' emerged; too good-humoured to drive, too many Who and Kinks undertones to be distinctive, 'Who'll Be The One' – again produced by Talmy – flopped. (For Young it 'wasn't in the same league as "Friday" – it wasn't even on the same planet'.) The over-experimental, Glyn Johns-produced, 'Pretty Girl'/'Heaven And Hell' also failed. Then, at the beginning of 1968, with 'flower power' and psychedelia on the wane and balladeers such as Engelbert Humperdinck and Tom Jones scoring in the charts, the Easybeats made a drastic change of direction: they decided to release a big ballad of their own. The booming, symphonic 'Hello, How Are You' proved to be the band's first hit for 18 months, but disappointed admirers.

With the frantic pop/rock number 'Good Times', released in July 1968 (though recorded some 12 months before, with Steve Marriott on backing vocals), the Easybeats finally found the ideal successor to 'Friday' – but it was two years too late. Towards the end of 1969, the group ground to a halt.

Vanda and Young stuck together and recorded under a variety of names, including Paintbox, Marcus Hook, Band of Hope and Flash and the Pan. The pair also branched into production and it was their adept work that steered AC/DC (the heavy metal band formed by George's younger brothers, Malcolm and Angus) to rock mega-stardom in the mid Seventies.

Throughout their career, the Easybeats were ill-served by management, record companies and, on occasion, their own judgement. Although history has given them an unwarranted 'one-hit-wonder' tag, they were a far more productive and creative band than the sporadic sequence of singles would suggest. Their albums, which include the Australian releases *Easy* (1965), *It's Too Easy* (1966) and the British *Good Friday* (1967), although inconsistent, contain many solid pop gems that demonstrate Vanda and Young's immaculate sense of dynamics and melodic imagination. There also exist many completed Easybeats tracks (estimates range from 50 to 70) that remain unissued. If some of these had seen the light of day, the story of Australia's best-loved band might have been a very different one.

TOM HIBBERT

The Easybeats
Recommended Listening

Good Friday (United Artists ULP 1167) (Includes: River Deep Mountain High, Do You Have A Soul, Saturday Night, Pretty Girl, Friday On My Mind, Happy Is The Man, Who'll Be The One, Made My Bed – Gonna Lie In It, Remember Sam, See Line Woman).

ROCKING THE CONTINENT

How good were European beat groups?

IN THE SIXTIES Britain joined the United States as leaders in the field of rock music, when the British beat invasion took Europe by storm. Throughout the whole of the decade Anglo-American influence was enormous, and though each country developed its own stars they usually followed one of two patterns, the solo singer in the Elvis mould or the beat group along the lines of the Beatles. While some achieved considerable and lasting success in their own country, very few were original enough to appeal successfully outside their home market.

Europe was not one homogeneous record market. Tastes and traditions varied considerably from country to country. In northern European countries such as Sweden and Holland, groups were popular, but in the latin countries of France, Italy and Spain the major domestic stars were usually solo singers.

In France the biggest rock'n'roll singer in the Sixties was Johnny Hallyday, who had built up a strong reputation as an earthy rocker who could belt out songs in a suitably transatlantic manner. His popularity peaked in the early Sixties but the hits continued throughout the decade. Only a few singers managed to make the charts in Britain and America. Exuding a sophisticated Gallic charm, Françoise

Hardy had three minor chart hits in Britain in the mid Sixties, of which 'All Over The World' (1965) was a Top Twenty hit. The biggest French success in Britain, however, was the controversial 'Je T'Aime . . . Moi Non Plus' by Jane Birkin and Serge Gainsbourg, which, despite being banned by the BBC, was a Number 1 hit in October 1969.

Rokes and Los Bravos

In Italy home-grown versions of rock never really displaced the ballad-singer. Italy's biggest selling pop group were the Rokes. Though they sang in Italian and were Italian based, all four members of the group were in fact English. In 1961 the group had left England for Hamburg, where they were invited to do a four-week tour of Italy. They made their debut in Milan, and in 1963 won a national talent contest that led to a package tour with Rita Pavone. From 1965 they enjoyed a run of (often self-penned) Top Ten hits, including the million-selling 'Piangi Con Me' in 1967. Another million-seller was 'Strasera Mi Ballo' by the Airdales, a black group who scored in 1967.

Los Bravos, a Spanish beat group with a German lead singer, had a big international hit in 1966 with 'Black Is Black'. Already major stars in Spain, their record company, Columbia Espanol, sent some of their material to Decca, who were sufficiently impressed to bring the group to record in London. 'Black Is Black' went to Number 2 in Britain and Number 4 in America. It was the first and last time a Spanish group had such international success, though they reached Number 16 in the UK with their follow-up single, 'I Don't Care', and they remained popular in Spain for the rest of the decade.

Opposite: Dutch child star Heintje (below) gazes up at Shocking Blue displaying their assets. Above: Tee Set had a 1970 Number 5 hit in the United States with 'Ma Belle Amie'. Below: One of the few continental groups to make an impression in the UK charts were Los Bravos, who scored with 'Black Is Black' in 1966.

Dutch cats

Though a small country, the Netherlands produced a number of good groups. By far the most successful were the Cats. Formed in 1964, the group's early releases were unspectacular copies of British pop songs. But after a while they started to write their own material and soon developed a highly original style. Their beautiful ballads with full orchestral backing gave them a succession of massive hits. 'Lea', and 'Where Have I Been Wrong' were both Dutch chart-toppers. 'Marian' gave the Cats an international smash which went to Number 1 in such diverse places as Lebanon and Malaysia.

Two other Dutch groups had big international hits in the Sixties. Tee Set began recording in 1966, and originally made covers of English hits. But in 1970 their self-penned, self-produced 'Ma Belle Amie' went to Number 5 in the United States. The six-man George Baker Selection were formed in 1969. Leader George Bouens wrote their debut disc 'Little Green Bag', which was a million-seller.

Shocking Blue were formed in 1968 by talented Dutch songwriter, producer and musician Robby Van Leuwen. He wrote and produced their third domestic release, 'Venus', which went on to become a surprise international hit. Released in 1969, it sold more than eight million copies around the world. It was Number 1 in at least 16 countries, including America. The lead singer of this four-piece band was the beautiful Mariska Veres, daughter of a gypsy violinist. Her powerful voice, coupled with the group's simple but driving country-rock style, gave Shocking Blue a number of hits in the Seventies.

Heintje in Germany

Whereas most European singers would sing in English when not using their native tongue, the Dutch artist Heintje chose to sing in German to cash in on the lucrative market there. (It was estimated that Germany was the world's fourth biggest record market during the Sixties.) His songs were carefully tailored for the German market – traditional folk songs given a heavy sentimental treatment. His first success was 'Mama', which became a Dutch Number 1 in 1967 and the following year topped the chart for 12 weeks in Germany, selling over a million copies. More million-sellers followed, including the untranslatable 'Heidsche Bumbeidschi', and two gold albums.

In Germany itself, despite the flourishing Hamburg scene, little native rock talent emerged in the Sixties. Internationally, Bert Kaempfert, Horst Jankowski and James Last had massive success in the MOR field and Freddy Quinn had several million-sellers in the late Fifties and early Sixties with a series of ballads and light pop songs.

Spotnicks and Hep Stars

In Scandinavia the scene was much more promising. Originating from Sweden, the Spotnicks were formed in 1957 as a country and western outfit called the Frazers. Changing their style, they shot to fame in 1962 as a Shadows-influenced instrumental group whose fast lead guitar and echo style won them a following throughout Europe.

A number of other Scandinavian groups achieved considerable regional success, most notably Denmark's Keld and the Donkeys and Sweden's Sven-Ingvars, Hootenanny Singers and the Hep Stars. The Hep Stars were one of the better-known Scandinavian groups and could claim the distinction of having Bjorn Ulvaeus and Benny Andersson in their ranks – both of whom were later to go on to form the male half of Abba.

The Hep Stars rose to fame in the mid Sixties and were very much a Beatles-influenced beat group. They sang British and American hits in English, and their stage act was copied from their English contemporaries. As the decade wore on, they began writing original material, which meant that they were able to evolve a style of their own. Their popularity grew and they became one of the most successful acts in Sweden.

Taken as a whole European pop music throughout the Sixties was highly derivative, with heavy British and American influences. Things began to change as the decade drew to a close, however. In Holland several groups were on the verge of international success and Golden Earring and Focus were to become major rock acts in the Seventies. In Sweden, Abba came together in 1971 and within a few years had become the world's most successful pop group since the Beatles. And in Germany a wave of new rock groups like Can, Kraftwerk and Faust were to come to the fore. If the Seventies were to see a flowering of European rock then the Sixties were a time when the first steps were taken by European groups and singers to free themselves from the domination of Britain and America.

DEMITRI ARGYROPULO

The Dutch group Golden Earring began life as a Sixties R&B outfit before progressing to hard rock and international chart success with 'Radar Love' in 1973.

THE GREAT MUSICIANS

Albert Lee

For country music fans, Albert Lee's playing is sheer delight. His technique is immensely accomplished, and for consummate musicianship he is pretty hard to touch. In the late Sixties he chose to ignore the ugly trend of stacking up Marshall amplifiers and wailing away at full blast. Instead, he stuck to the unique style and sound that have made him one of the top country guitarists around.

Lee joined Chris Farlowe and the Thunderbirds in 1964 and toured with them for four years, during which time he was a major influence on such younger guitarists as Jimmy Page and Steve Howe. From 1968 to 1970 Lee backed various country artists and co-founded Heads, Hands and Feet. Their debut album contained the now-classic 'Country Boy', a showcase for Lee's incredibly fast picking style. He then went on to play for Jerry Lee Lewis on the *London Session* album (1973) and toured and recorded with the Crickets.

In 1974 Lee arrived in Los Angeles and, disappointed with his efforts to gain recognition through touring, involved himself in session work. He met Don Everly, with whom he recorded the *Sunset Towers* LP, and subsequently played alongside musicians he had previously idolised, such as Jerry Lee Lewis and James Burton. Lee replaced Burton in Emmylou Harris' Hot Band in 1976 and went on to record six albums with the group. As well as proving himself to be a highly-adaptable guitarist, matching Emmylou's sweet and emotive singing with his soft and fluid playing, Lee established himself as a fine mandolin player. Some of the best examples of his playing with Emmylou are tracks like 'Luxury Liner' and 'C'est La Vie' from the *Luxury Liner* LP, 'How High The Moon' and 'Oh Atlanta' from the *Evangeline* LP and the Grammy Award-winning 'Blue Kentucky Girl'.

Lee released his solo album, *Hiding*, in 1979. Produced by Emmylou Harris' producer Brian Ahern, it featured an impressive group of musicians including Harris, John Ware, Emory Gordy, Hank Devito, Ricky Skaggs and Rodney Crowell of the Hot Band, Chas and Dave, and Buddy Emmons. Although it included a staggering re-recording of 'Country Boy', the album failed to establish Lee as a solo artist and led him to join Eric Clapton as a sideman. The combination of the two musicians was quite brilliant, as the live album, *Just One Night*, demonstrated. Lee also contributed to Clapton's next studio LP, *Another Ticket*. Other notable playing from Lee can be heard on two of Dave Edmunds' albums – *Repeat When Necessary* and *DE7*. Lee's playing on 'Sweet Little Lisa', 'Paula Meet Jeanne' and 'Warmed Over Kisses, Left Over Love' is blistering rock'n'roll of the finest calibre.

One of Lee's trademarks is his picking technique. This incorporates the use of both a flat pick and several fingers, which gives his playing a remarkable fluency. Another feature is his use of the pull-string guitar. This has a mechanism, devised by the Byrds' Clarence White, that alters the pitch of the instrument's B-string. When the guitar is pushed away from the player, a lever attached to one of the strap buttons pulls the string, enabling Lee to imitate pedal steel guitar licks in a unique way.

In common with many country-based guitarists, Albert Lee has played a Fender Telecaster throughout most of his career. Unlike many other guitars, the Telecaster has a language of its own and has nurtured a whole school of players, including James Burton, Roy Buchanan, Arlen Roth and Steve Cropper. Lee's favourite guitars are a 1952 and 1953 Telecaster. His other instruments include a Gibson Jumbo steel-strung J-200 given to him by Don Everly, plus three other Gibson Everly Brothers-style acoustics, a 1958 Stratocaster and a Fifties-vintage Fender Jazzmaster.

Despite his impressive career, Albert Lee is a quiet, unassuming character who plays guitar simply for the love of it. Indeed, on his return to the UK after month-long tours of the USA with Eric Clapton, you're more than likely to catch Lee playing in an East End pub with old friends such as Chas and Dave.

DAVE CAIRNS

Below: Albert Lee steals the spotlight from Eric Clapton.
Overleaf: Wielding his Telecaster with Heads, Hands and Feet.

THE HISTORY OF

Rock